

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

A TEXT-BOOK OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE BY AMERICAN TEACHERS. Edited by WILLIAM PEPPER, M.D., LL.D., etc. In two volumes, illustrated, royal octavo. Vol. I, 909 pages, 58 illustrations, 3 plates. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1893.

This work on the Theory and Practice of Medicine is—to quote from the announcement—"composed of a series of articles (each bearing the author's name) upon each disease, or set of diseases, by various authorities, selected with care from the faculties of the various medical schools of the country, with a view to obtain the very best and latest opinions and treatment of specialists in each department of medicine; and will, therefore, thoroughly represent the subjects as taught in American colleges." In support of this statement it will only be necessary to say that the men thus associated are Welch, Delafield, Janeway, Osler, and others of equal eminence, and that the editor himself is the author of a number of the most valuable articles in the series.

To attempt to review at length all of the articles which appear in this volume is needless, but several of them, somewhat in the line of innovations in a text-book devoted to general medicine, merit special attention.

The first of these is the opening article on Hygiene, by J. S. Billings, a subject much neglected by students and by practitioners, but one which is becoming more and more to be recognized as essential for the scientific prevention and treatment of disease. Dr. Billings discusses at length such topics as disinfection, isolation, habitations, water supply, sewage disposal, house sewerage, ventilation and sanitary jurisprudence, and, as the writer has had at his dis-

posal unusual facilities, quite out of the reach of the average physician, his views are of more than ordinary value.

A large part of this first volume is devoted to the various forms of fevers, including the exanthemata and some of the infectious diseases. The various articles are clearly and concisely written, and are made of special value by the exhibition of temperature charts wherever needed; and also by a careful description of bacteria and other micro-organisms when their relation to a given disease is definitely known. The articles on typhoid, typhus and cerebro-spinal fevers and influenza, by William Pepper; on the exanthemata, especially scarlatina and measles, by James T. Whittaker, and on syphilis, diphtheria, yellow fever and cholera, by W. Gilman Thompson, deserve special commendation. Besides these more-usual diseases, the rarer ones of dengue, relapsing fever, actinomycosis, anthrax, hydrophobia and many others are not forgotten.

Horatio C. Wood and William Osler have contributed the various articles that go to make up the latter half of the volume, which is devoted to nervous affections. The general symptomatology of diseases of the nervous system is given at some length, and in the succeeding articles functional and organic diseases of the brain and of the spinal cord are described in full detail.

The long chapter on insanity, by the first of the above mentioned authors, is another innovation in such a text-book, and is worthy of more than a mere mention. A thorough explanation of the various factors involved in the diagnosis of Insanity (such as delusions, systematized delusions, hallucinations, morbid desires, etc.) serves as an introduction to the subject. The author, like Krafft-Ebing, of Vienna, regards "many of the so-called insanities as mere symptom-groups arbitrarily separated;" and the systems of classification, adopted by these two noted alienists, are very similar and very simple, a fact for which all students should be thankful, for it does much to dispel the clouds of uncertainty which nomenclature-mad writers have drawn about the subject.

The pathology, so far as is known, in each condition is presented to the reader—as it is indeed throughout the book—but no attempt is made to show that all conditions can be explained by the findings in a stained section. The author says: “I believe the changes are physical, but I believe it is not within human power to recognize their nature. The microscope is a coarse blundering tool, powerless to reveal the ultimate changes of nervous protoplasm run mad.”

The various types of mental diseases are clearly described, and cogent examples cited, so that taken altogether, the chapter is one of the most valuable in the volume.

The work is well written throughout. The most recent investigations, as regards causation, symptomatology, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment, are given in such a way as to be valuable to the student as a text-book, and to the practitioner as a book of reference. Immunity is discussed at length. The sections devoted to diagnosis embody the methods of special diagnosis as well, so that the use of separate books of reference on these subjects is for the most part unnecessary.

Books such as this are especially apt to impress one with a realization of the enormous advances in the medical sciences which have been made within recent years. “In the good old colony times,” and even down to the student days of living practitioner’s text-books on medicine were written, in which one man was wont to discuss in a moderate-sized volume all of the subjects of medicine, including under that heading surgery, diseases of the eye, the ear, the skin, etc. This old order of things gradually disappeared, and then came the era of separate volumes devoted to each of these subjects. Of late years even this has proved to be too wide a field for writers to cover well; and now individual diseases, and even variations of a given disease, have been made the subject for elaborate monographs or treatises.

In medicine and surgery, which seem to require a consideration of the entire subject in one or two volumes, the co-operative system,

which has accomplished so much in more material ways, has been employed, and men who have attained eminence in special fields, unite in writing a book which, when complete, embodies the most advanced ideas of the best practitioners of the day.

The American systems of obstetrics, of gynaecology and of surgery, which are already well known and widely used among the profession, are good examples of this type of work, and this latest bidder for popular favor is sure soon to take its place by their side.

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NUEVA CONCEPTA DE LA HISTOLOGIA DE LOS CENTROS NERVOSOS.

Por el DR. D. SANTIAGO RAMON Y CAJAL. Conferencias pronunciadas en la Academia y Laboratorio de Ciencias Medicas de Cataluna. March 14, 18, 19, 1892, Barcelona, 1893. ("New conception of the histology of the nervous centres.")

This brochure in Spanish, reprinted from the *Revista de Ciencias Medicas*, of Barcelona, contains in three lectures a statement of the results of the comparatively recent investigations that have, in some respects, rather revolutionized our ideas on the finer structure of the nervous centres. The author speaks with authority, since his personal labors have contributed no small part, if not, indeed, the greater part, to these results. The general conclusion of his lectures as given are of interest, as his own statements of these important contributions to our knowledge. Stated briefly they are as follows:

(1) The most general conclusion relative to the morphology of the cells of the centres is the absence of substantial continuity between the expansions of the nervous, epithelial, and neuroglia corpuscles. The nervous elements represent true cellular unities, or *neuronas*, to use Waldeyer's term.

(2) There being no substantial continuity, the currents must com-